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THE
Family Memorial,
AND
PASTORAL REMEMBRANCER.

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THE
Family Memorial,
AND
PASTORAL REMEMBRANCER;
BEING
A SHORT MEMOIR
OF
MRS. HILLARIA SHREWSBURY,
AND
A SERMON,
PREACHED IN THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL,
GRAHAM'S TOWN, JUNE 7TH, 1835.



BY WILLIAM J. SHREWSBURY.

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1839

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**TO MY FAMILY,
AND
TO MY BELOVED BRETHREN
IN
GRAHAM'S TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA,
THIS MEMORIAL
OF
DEPARTED WORTH, AND OF FORMER MINISTRATIONS,
IS INSCRIBED BY
THEIR FATHER AND PASTOR,
W. J. SHREWSBURY.**

BRADFORD,
January 1st, 1839.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following Memoir is reprinted from the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine of last year; and instead of enlarging the Narrative, as was desired, the Sermon to which reference is made, is now added. It was thought that they whose spiritual interests are primarily kept in view would be more profited by having the Discourse in this connection, than by an extended Memoir. And to perfect the remembrance of the solemnities of that Sabbath Morning, so much of the Hymns has been added as was sung on that occasion. At the same time, it is hoped that every page of this little volume will contain something to edify the serious reader in this country, as well as benefit the Family of the deceased, and our much loved Friends in distant lands.

W. J. S.



THE
FAMILY MEMORIAL,
AND
PASTORAL REMEMBRANCER.

HILLARIA SHREWSBURY was the daughter of William John and Mary King, of Barbadoes. She was born in Demerara, May 10th, 1802, her father's business having occasioned her parents to remove to that colony for a short season ; but soon after her birth they returned to Barbadoes, in which island she spent all the earliest years of her life. Mr. King was a respectable builder and architect : most of the Government and other public buildings were erected by him, or under his superintendence. He was a man of a generous and hospitable disposition, and was generally esteemed by his countrymen. The memory of Mrs. King is worthy of being had in "everlasting remembrance" for her kindness to the afflicted and poor, and in particular for her attentions to our Missionaries, who always found a hearty welcome to her habitation, when no other suitable home

could be provided for them. To Missionaries who, at different times on their voyage out, touched at Barbadoes, when there was no resident Missionary on that island to receive them, she sent her friendly invitations, and entertained them under her roof during their stay ; and while many looked upon them with scorn and contempt, she highly honoured them as the servants of the living God. She bore her husband fourteen children, and my beloved wife was her youngest daughter. She died early in the year 1820. I visited her in her last illness, and trust that her end was peace.

My personal knowledge of the family commenced in February, 1820, at which time I received an appointment to the island of Barbadoes. They occasionally attended the Methodist ministry. And under a funeral sermon, which I delivered in August that year, on an aged member of the society, from Revelation xiv. 13, it pleased God to awaken my late wife to a sense of her sinfulness and misery. She immediately joined the society, although this step was not approved of by her parents; for, though they respected the Ministers, they did not wish to see their daughter so closely connected with a poor and despised people, many of whom were persons of colour and slaves. Uninfluenced by these preju-

dices, she at once relinquished all her former gay acquaintance, and chose for her sole companions and friends a few of our pious coloured females ; especially Mrs. Ann Gill and her truly excellent sister. These were the guides of her early youth in her way to the kingdom, with whom she often visited the outcasts of society, and spent many an hour in spiritual conversation and social prayer. At one period, when it was evident that she had sustained spiritual loss by occasional intercourse with those who were not seeking the things which are above, Miss Christian Gill reproved her with fidelity and success. The snare was broken, and she separated herself so entirely from the world, and evinced such a steady and decided attachment to those with whom she was joined in Christian fellowship, as to awaken the latent prejudices, and even excite the opposition, of her excellent and indulgent mother. The notion that she was acting in a way rather degrading to the family by such an utter renunciation of worldly friendship, and so strict an adherence to a "sect every where spoken against," gave rise to a species of persecution sometimes rather severe, and always annoying and vexatious. But she could never be induced to forsake the people of her choice, nor to neglect one single means of grace which it was in her power

to attend. After she had continued thus steadfastly cleaving to God for a considerable period, seeking earnestly his pardoning mercy, she obtained that great blessing while reading the holy Scriptures in secret. She was reading the prophecy of Haggai, and when she came to those words, "From this day will I bless you," the Holy Spirit applied them with such power, that she was enabled to rejoice in the God of her salvation. And I have often heard her declare that she never entirely lost a sense of the divine savour which she obtained in that hour. A few fragments of a diary, commenced at this time, have been discovered since her death, in which she frequently speaks of her peace and joy in believing; of hungering and thirsting after righteousness; of communion with God, and of the enjoyment of his presence, both in the public and private means of grace. And the first verse of her favourite Psalm is often written therein: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"

It was on the first day of January, 1823, that we, with the entire approbation of her family connexions, and to the satisfaction of our Barbadoes society, were united in marriage. "The Lord gave" her to me; and it was solely owing to the influence of her relations that my life was preserved in the latter part

of that eventful year. Persecution raged against the Methodists at that time ; and other acts of violence were followed by the destruction of the chapel in the month of October. I especially was marked out as an individual obnoxious to the public vengeance. It was firmly believed by most persons that I was an agent of the Society established in England for the extinction of colonial slavery. This was altogether a mistaken opinion, for I never wrote a single line to any public political man on any subject; nor in my correspondence with my private friends did I ever mention one single fact prejudicial to the interests of that or any other colony in which I resided. But my declaration to that effect was not credited, although made with the greatest sincerity; so difficult is it to control the public mind, when it is borne along by powerful prejudices, accidentally increased to a more than ordinary degree of strength. That we were enemies to slavery, I will not deny. And as my father-in-law's property had been accumulated, though not by slave-dealing, yet by slave-labour, my wife agreed with me after our marriage to renounce our expectation of any share in it; and accordingly we expressed our desire to be excluded altogether from his will. She scarcely felt this to be a sacrifice, for, being content with that moderate provision

for present necessities which is allowed to Wesleyan Missionaries and their families, she was not anxious for the future, but, through faith, committed herself and all her concerns to the never-failing care of God. When it was found necessary for me to quit the colony, she refused to tarry, notwithstanding the peculiar peril that attended travelling by sea in her circumstances ; and well do I remember with what fortitude she bore our trials, when, as we first entered the little vessel that had been hired to convey us away, I said, with a smile, “ See, my dear, *the fortune* you have gained by marrying a Methodist Missionary.” Anxiety for my preservation and escape seemed to cause her to forget the sorrow of parting from her own kindred, and from her aged father, who came before the dawn of day to bid us farewell ; and that was the last time her eyes beheld him and them ; and in that manner were all her family ties rent asunder, and thus were we driven away from our dearest Christian friends, by the violence of certain leading men in the colony, whom we had never injured, either in word or deed. Often did I indulge the thought, in the midst of her afflictions in Africa, that God would be graciously pleased to reward her by permitting her once more to meet her kindred on earth ; and sometimes conversation

on that subject proved exhilarating to her spirit; but she would generally close it with some such remark as this :—“We must leave it all to God.” Could we have foreseen that that separation would have been final, it certainly would have filled all our hearts with anguish that would have been altogether insupportable in that day of heavy calamity and woe.

After our departure from Barbadoes, towards midnight the pains of travail commenced. We knew not what to do. No female was with us, and the vessel was small, manned by the Captain and three sailors. We could only cry to God in our troubles; and the Captain, who was an exceedingly wicked man, acknowledged, that, though he had never prayed to God before, yet, when he saw our distressing condition, he could not help praying also. It pleased God to give us a gentle and easy passage to St. Vincent's, so that she scarcely suffered any thing from sea-sickness, (and yet in all our subsequent voyages she was never exempted from it,) and on the forenoon of the following day we landed safely on that island ; and a few hours after our arrival she was delivered of a son. It was natural to fear the consequences of confinement under such peculiar circumstances; but she was so exceedingly comforted and supported by the grace of God, that her body

appeared to be endued with supernatural strength and vigour. She declared to me that her soul was so filled with holy joy that she could scarcely refrain from singing aloud the praises of God in the midst of the pains of labour. The destruction of our chapel, the destitute state of the society, and the apparent ruin of our Mission in Barbadoes, so exceedingly distressed me, that sleep departed from my eyes ; but she was borne aloft as on the wings of an eagle, and became my comforter in the time of tribulation. We did not remain long in St. Vincent's, for the District Meeting following appointed me to the island of Grenada. It was the desire of the Missionary Committee that I should still continue in the West Indies, and with their wish it was my intention to comply. The following circumstance, however, led to my early departure :—Being one day in the house of a Manager of an estate, to which we had access, through the kindness of the Attorney who directed its concerns, for the purpose of instructing the negroes, the Manager expressed himself in a very violent and bitter manner against the Rev. John Smith, a Missionary of the London Society, who had recently died in prison in Demerara. As I personally knew that excellent man, I could not hear the character of a Christian brother vilely traduced without attempt-

ing to vindicate it, by making honourable mention of his name and memory. This gave great offence not only to the Manager, but also to his employer, unto whom the conversation was reported; for it was conceived that any defence of Mr. Smith, indirectly at least, reflected dishonour upon the conduct of his accusers and judges, some of whom he reckoned amongst his friends. Finding, therefore, that my continuance would probably cause the door to be shut against us on some of the estates where we exercised our ministry, when my brethren were consulted, it was judged best for me quietly to retire from the gathering storm. To my dear wife this proved a new and unexpected trial; but she submitted without a moment's hesitation, when it appeared to be the path of duty; and accordingly, with our only infant, we sailed from Grenada in May, 1824, and landed at Deal, my native town, on the 27th of June following. We had a most affecting interview with my kindred. My parents, with their large family, all of whom were living in that town, and their grandchildren, all of whom had been born since the time I left my father's house, came in one after the other, to salute us, and offer thanksgivings unto God for his preserving care. To her, the persons, the place, the country, in short, every thing connected with our meeting together, were

entirely strange, and new, save only the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and the employment of prayer and praise. Having continued a few weeks at Deal, we removed to Brighton, to which circuit I was appointed by the Conference. There we spent a comfortable year; and she formed an intimate acquaintance with several pious females, whom she most sincerely loved, and often spoke of with affection unto the end of her days.

When our year had expired at Brighton, we prepared again to enter on the toils of a Missionary life. Several places had been mentioned to us as the scene of our future labours, while we were in the Brighton Circuit; but she never attempted in the least to influence my choice; her only desire being that I should act according to my conscientious conviction of the will of God, and then she was prepared to accompany me to the ends of the earth. Once indeed she expressed her opinion that I was premature in offering my services for Sierra-Leone; but she had no wish for me to retract my proffered services, should the Missionary Committee see fit to accept of them. At length it was decided that I should commence, with the late Mr. Threlfall, a Wesleyan Mission in the island of Madagascar. Subsequently, however, our destination was altered for South Africa.

After a stormy and perilous voyage, we arrived at Cape-Town early in April, 1826, and were affectionately received by the Rev. James Whitworth, whom I had formerly known as a fellow-labourer in the West Indies: my wife he gladly received for her mother's sake, who had shown him kindness many years prior to that period when he was stationed in the Island of Barbadoes. While remaining at Cape-Town, she was delivered of her third child, and our second son; and soon after we departed for Albany, and from thence to Wesleyville in Kaffraria, where she resided until our removal to the people of the Chieftain Hintsia. This may be considered as the most vigorous period of her life. At that time she was remarkably strong and healthy; and her appearance seemed to indicate that she would see her children's children in peace. It was the hardships of the Kafir-land Mission that made the first inroads upon her constitution, and laid the foundation of that complication of painful afflictions which terminated in her death. This she well knew; for she often traced the several stages of her afflictions up to their commencement; but she never regretted the loss of health and life in such a work, nor did I ever once hear a single murmuring expression from her lips. Her resignation was always the most exemplary when her sufferings

were at their severest height. She sometimes sighed and groaned by reason of pain, but when she spoke, the words most frequently uttered were, "O my Father!" or, when addressing the Lord Jesus, "O, my Master!" or, "O, my blessed Saviour!"

The first severe affliction with which she was visited came upon her at Butterworth, in Kafirland. As the chief Hintsa appeared disposed to throw certain obstacles in the way of establishing a Mission in that part of Kaffraria, it was thought advisable that I should take my family at once to the spot we had chosen, that he might understand it was our fixed determination to dwell amongst his people, unless he actually commanded us to depart. When he understood our views and intentions, he laid aside his reserve, and gave us a cordial reception. Accompanied by the Rev. William Shaw, we left Wesleyville on the 14th of May, 1827, and reached the end of our journey in about a fortnight from the time of our departure. The last day or two the wind was exceedingly strong and cold, which induced us to take shelter under a high rock by the river-side. As the rains were approaching, a mere hut was hastily erected, into which we entered eight days after it was begun, the plastered walls being still extremely wet and damp; and yet we preferred the risk of occupy-

ing it, to being exposed to the cold air and the damp vapours arising from the river, near which for the first few days we abode. We had succeeded, indeed, in establishing the Mission; but before we had been there a month, my wife was attacked with violent rheumatic pains, to which was also added a severe ophthalmia, so that I feared at one time she would never recover her eyesight any more. These afflictions continued many weeks; and although when the warm weather came on she recovered in a great measure, yet she never regained her former health and vigour.

While we remained at Butterworth, notwithstanding her frequent afflictions, she laboured to advance the interests of the Mission. She very often conversed with the natives on the things of God, and endeavoured to instruct their children. To a daughter of Hintsa, who died of a consumption, she paid much attention; which probably was one principal cause of the strong attachment which Nomtsa, mother of the young woman, felt towards her. On some occasions her confidence in God was severely tried. Once she remained alone with me on the station, when the whole country was thrown into confusion and consternation by the desolating victories of the Zulu murderer, Chaka. At another time, when she was but very

partially recovered from a second attack of rheumatism, she urged me to go and visit Mr. Shepstone, whose assistant had been accidentally killed while he was felling a tree. On the table from whence he had eaten his breakfast, he was laid out a corpse before noon: My mind was divided by conflicting claims of duty. It was necessary for Mr. Shepstone to conduct the widow of his bereaved assistant to the colony; and yet in that distant land, where there were continual wars and rumours of wars, he could not leave his own wife and family without a protector. He desired my help; but my presence seemed so necessary for the comfort of my wife, that I knew not how to leave her. She, however, decided the matter by urging me to visit Morley, at the same time expressing her firm persuasion that God would preserve her safely from all evil until my return. When I entered my own habitation again, three weeks afterwards, I found that her faith in God had not been in vain. We continued at Butterworth until January, 1830, and then left with deep regret a Mission which we had been the honoured instruments of establishing, to occupy a station which had been allotted to us nearer the colony.

The three following years of her life were spent at Mount-Coke. There also she was employed, as far

as the cares of an increasing family would admit, in variously aiding the Mission cause, by employing a portion of her time in the school department; by attending the sick; and often administering medicine; and by frequent conversations with the Kafirs, who were constantly visiting us, on their best and eternal interests. She had now acquired a sufficient knowledge of their language to express herself in a plain and simple way to the people on divine things in their own tongue; and when she found herself embarrassed, her acquaintance with the Dutch enabled her to communicate instruction through the medium of an interpreter. But here also she was called to endure great trials. Once our eldest daughter escaped as by miracle from being burned to death. She ran into the house one morning from the kitchen, enveloped in flames, and I, through a concurrence of striking providences, being just at hand, threw her on the floor, and by tearing off so much of her garments as were not consumed, saved her life. As there was no medical help at hand, we were obliged morning and night to dress her wounds ourselves; which, at the expiration of nearly three months, and the endurance of amazing suffering, were perfectly healed. On account of the difficulties and cares connected with commencing the Butterworth Mission in 1821,

it was soon found necessary to put our two eldest children to school in the colony, although this poor child was not at that time quite four years of age. This was very painful to the mother's feelings, especially as we were too far distant from the colony to have them with us during the vacation. They were therefore never under the parental roof, till we removed to Mount-Coke. At the Christmas recess of 1830, they were brought home, and had only been one week with us when the sad accident above referred to occurred. We were chastened with many other domestic afflictions, but the heaviest of all was that which came upon us in May, 1832. While returning from Graham's-Town to our station, just after her confinement, we were overtaken by tremendous rains in the Fish-river bush. Although our waggon was well covered in, it was impossible wholly to exclude the damp and cold. The severity of the weather, in her comparatively feeble state of health, occasioned a third attack of rheumatism, which, though of somewhat shorter duration than the former, was more violent while it lasted. She was reduced to a state of utter helplessness, and all her bones were chastened with strong pain; but it was "consecrated pain;" for it wrought in her "*the peaceable fruits of righteousness,*" and "*a meetness for the inheritance*

of the saints in light." When the cold season had passed away, she slowly recovered, and continued improving in health the rest of our time at Mount-Coke. But the affliction left terrible marks of its severity on her frame; for there was not a joint of either of the hands or feet that had not been more or less distorted by it; and the weakness that followed was so great that she could never afterwards attend to her domestic concerns to her own satisfaction.

In February, 1833, we removed to Graham's-Town. Here electricity was tried with some success, and a partial cure seemed to be effected. But still afflictions awaited her; for God had "chosen her in the furnace of affliction." Towards the close of that year she was confined of her last surviving child. It became evident at that time that her constitution was broken, and her strength nearly exhausted. A short visit, however, to the sea-coast appeared to re-invigorate her frame. But on the day we returned to Graham's-Town, I was seized with fever, and laid aside for nearly two months; and then one child after the other was laid up with the same fever, until my house became a complete hospital; and so it was generally denominated by our medical attendant. During these afflictions, God was remarkably gracious.

unto her, and endued her with a degree of bodily strength ; and though my life was despaired of, yet he, foreknowing how soon her course would be terminated, in great mercy raised me up, that our children might not be deprived of both their parents in a strange land. Scarcely, however, had we recovered, when rheumatism, for the fourth time, attacked her, and bore down her remaining strength. It continued long, and her sufferings were greater than at any former period ; and so was her patience and resignation to the will of God. She never appeared so lovely as in distress. Her groans were prayers ; her sighs, devotion ; and her tears, mingled with thanksgiving. Often would she say, " I hope I do not murmur, I hope I shall never murmur, but only desire the will of the Lord to be done."

Towards the end of 1834, when the cold rains had ceased, she revived a little ; but she frequently complained of exhaustion, and inability for the least degree of exertion. In December that year the Kafir war broke out ; and at the time of the greatest peril, those parts of the town that were thought most exposed to the expected attack of the Kafirs were deserted by the inhabitants. The church, and the houses in its vicinity, were appointed for the reception of females ; and it was very affecting to see mothers

with their children, towards sunset, leaving their habitations, and retiring within the limits of the church-square for the night. The square was barricadoed, and cannon were planted in every direction, and the male inhabitants, with the military, were stationed for the general defence, resolved there to make a stand, in whatever numbers the hostile tribes might come against them. Parties of them came at different times, and in different directions, within sight of the town, but they never ventured to assault it. We were not willing to quit the Mission-house, until a military officer informed us that in the event of the Kafirs collecting on the level ground behind us, the cannon would probably batter down our house, and expose our lives to danger. We then quitted the house for a few nights; but not feeling comfortable in doing so, we soon resolved to abide in our dwelling, and commit ourselves wholly to the care of God.

The excitement occasioned by the perpetual rumours of murders and desolations, and by the signs of fear and dismay that were seen so generally in the countenances of the inhabitants, had an unfavourable effect upon her, debilitated as she had been by previous sufferings. But by waiting upon God in secret she was strengthened with might by his "Spirit

in the inner man," and was enabled to "comfort others by the comfort wherewith she herself was comforted of God." On Christmas-day, especially, while reading the holy Scriptures in her chamber, she received a remarkable blessing ; and never afterwards felt much uneasiness of mind with regard to her own safety, or the preservation of the children. In the early part of 1835 she often complained of weakness ; but her health did not much decline until May, when, after a miscarriage, both our medical attendant, and all our friends, insisted on the necessity of a voyage, as the only remaining means of preserving her life. When I consulted her on this subject, from a fear of leading me out of my providential sphere, she declined giving her opinion. "Do," said she, "that which appears to your own judgment to be the will of God ; and I shall be satisfied with the decision, whatever it may be." On the following day I urgently pressed the point again, when she remarked, "Life is sweet ; and when I consider the children, I feel a wish to live." But still she desired that I should solely act according to my views of duty to God and his church in my Christian and ministerial calling. On this point I had no doubt in my mind. I was convinced that it would be sinful in me to leave any means untried of saving so valuable a life,—the life of one

so dear to me, and through whose family influence my own life had been rescued from destruction in Barbadoes. Accordingly, full of hope of her ultimate recovery, I took a passage in the first vessel sailing from Algoa-Bay ; nor did my hope of her restoration utterly forsake me, until a short period before her death.

The closing scene of her life was edifying and instructive in the highest degree. It was on Friday, the 5th of June, that she was first brought under the pains of death. The preceding Sabbath morning she had crawled over to the chapel, and heard me preach the last discourse ever delivered in her hearing, from "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Unable to go up the aisle, she sat on the lowest seat by the door ; and well do I remember being struck with her uncommonly devout appearance as I looked at her for a moment from the pulpit ; although I durst not look more than a moment, or it would have broken my heart. Much as I clung to the hope that the sea-air would be the means of "renewing her youth like the eagle's," I could not entirely avoid painful forebodings of our early separation. During the greater part of the week she remained in much the same low and weak condition. On Friday morning, while I was alone waiting upon God, the

whole passage of Abraham's offering up Isaac rushed into my mind in a moment, accompanied with an impression that God was about to take her from me; and that I ought not to wait for the tie which united us to be rent asunder, but solemnly to give her up to Him who had given her to me. At the same time the words of the Psalmist came with great energy to my remembrance, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." And before I rose from my knees, I did, with many tears, offer her up to God, and acknowledge his supremacy and right to do what he pleased with his creatures, and demand what he pleased from them. It was in the afternoon of that day that she became much worse, and passed through indescribable agonies, which she said were "worse than three labours." When I entered the chamber, she was weeping, and her countenance was strongly indicative of sorrow, and a more than ordinary degree of suffering. I exhorted her to patience; and she replied, "I do not murmur, but I cannot help weeping under so much pain; yet," continued she "my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude." The following day she seemed somewhat better. Sunday, June 7th, which proved to be her last Sabbath on earth, she was still apparently reviving; and therefore in the morning of that day I led the children into the room,

one by one, to her bed-side, and placed the youngest for a few moments on the bed in her arms. She embraced her tenderly, and kissed the babe, and after that saw her no more. As it was customary with me to leave with her the hymns, lessons, and an outline of the sermon about to be delivered, when she was unable to attend the chapel, I did so this morning, and sister Richard Walker stayed with her during the service. They spent the morning profitably together; and her mind was calm, serene and cheerful. On hearing the first hymn read,

“Thee Jesus, full of truth and grace,
Thee, Saviour, we adore;
Thee in affliction’s furnace praise,
And magnify thy power;”

she added, “Yes, and goodness too.” While the second hymn was read, she especially took up, as descriptive of her experience, these lines.

“In love, be every wish resign’d,
And hallow’d my whole heart to thee.”

And on hearing the third hymn,

“Father in the name I pray
Of thy incarnate Love,” &c.,

she observed that all those hymns seemed to have been composed for her, so exactly did they describe her spiritual state and wants. She was tolerably composed throughout the day, until about the time

of the evening service, when she felt a sensible change for the worse. This, however, she concealed from me, as the congregation was waiting ; and I knew nothing of the matter till the sacramental service, after the preaching, was nearly concluded. I had just given out this verse,—

“ See, ye sinners, see the flame,
Rising from the slaughter'd lamb,
Marks the new, the living way,
Leading to eternal day,”—

when I was hastily sent for to her bedside, and found her apparently smitten for death. I sat down and wept abundantly. “ My love,” said she, “ why do you weep ? It distresses me to see you in so muc trouble. Thank God, I can die, and leave my chil-dren with comfort.” This last sentence she repeated thrice. Prompt medical aid being sent for, the fatal hour was averted a few days longer. In about an hour she revived again, and enjoyed some rest during the night. Monday, June 8th, was our day of public thanksgiving for preservation and deliverance from the Kafirs, throughout the late irruption. She continued low, but easy, till midnight. About that time the two female attendants called me up, on account of her restlessness, and the cold sweats upon her. As I approached the bedside, I heard her

feeble say, "Death ! what is it ? the servant of Christ." After a little while she became easier, and expressed a desire to sleep, and I retired to my adjoining room. When I lay down, a multitude of scriptures were in my thoughts ; but the passage which was applied with the greatest power was the promise, by reading which she found peace, although I was not thinking of her conversion at the time, namely, "From this day will I bless you." And its application to my heart was as follows :—" From the day God shall take away thy wife, he will bless her with his heavenly glory ; and from that day he will bless thee more abundantly with his presence on earth." I mourned greatly ; and yet remembering my offering, which God to my apprehension seemed to require at my hands, I dared not withdraw the sacrifice.—Tuesday, the 9th. In the forenoon Mr. Daniel Roberts, one of our Leaders, visited her, and we spent a very profitable hour together. To him she said, " Though I feel deeply sensible of my unworthiness and unprofitableness, yet I rejoice at the thought, that God knows my heart." He encouraged her to look up for a greater salvation, and in particular quoted, as appropriate to her condition, these beautiful lines :

" And when my all of strength doth fail,
I shall with the God-man prevail."

She was about explaining to him her desire to come nearer to Christ, and more firmly to lay hold upon him, when I interrupted her by saying, "Nay, my dear, be satisfied with only touching the hem of his garment." I sought to comfort her, but the momentary interruption caused her to forget entirely what she intended to state more fully, so great was her feebleness; when I added, "Since the Lord Jesus commanded, 'What God hath joined together let not man put asunder,' do you think that he will allow *death to separate* whom he hath joined?" She answered, "No." Again I inquired, "Do you not think it would increase your joy in the heavenly world, if, when angels announce the conversion of sinners, it should be communicated to you, that any had been brought to God by my ministry?" With delightful feelings she gently answered, "Yes." Perceiving me turn aside, and weep bitterly in the anguish of my soul, she tenderly entreated me not to mourn, since God would be my support, and "on no account to murmur against Him." I said, "O no, I murmur not; for if God were not only to take you away, but all the seven children also at a stroke, I think I should still say, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.'" Afterwards, Mr. Roberts prayed; and so ended the solemnities of that never-to-be-forgotten

hour.—On Wednesday, the 10th, Mr. Haddy visited her, when we had an unusually profitable season in prayer. Indeed, much as God had often blessed us together in this duty, we never enjoyed any thing equal to the grace and power resting on us during the last few days of her life. And she was so much revived that I thought, “Surely now the bitterness of death is past. God hath accepted my offering, and having tried me to the uttermost, he will restore my Isaac without requiring the sacrifice: And perhaps in the course of his future providence he will make us glad, according to the days wherein he has afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.” It does not appear, however, that she herself had any expectation of recovery; for in the afternoon, when the children came home from school, she said to me, “Why do you bring them home again? I have given them all up to God; yet when I hear their voices, it distresses me.” I told her that I knew not that she had been so employed during the day. After that the children were placed out with our friends, and she scarce mentioned them any more, until just before she expired. In the course of that night she rested better than usual. Whenever she aroused I approached near, and the first words I always heard as she awoke from slumber,

were, "Blessed be God!" That exclamation was frequently uttered during the night, and once she added, "O, who shall say now, that God doth not hear prayer?"—Thursday 11th. Early this morning she told me that God had abundantly refreshed her with his love during the night season; and that though she was afraid of expressing herself in too confident language, she would almost venture to declare that he had cleansed her from all unrighteousness. And indeed, her body also seemed quite renovated, and her countenance indicated a kind of healthful change, insomuch that the medical attendants were themselves astonished, and ordered her to be removed from her bed to the sofa in the outer room. Now my hopes of her recovery rose high, and I told my brethren that I received her again from God, as one raised from the dead; and they all congratulated me on the prospect of her being spared to undertake the voyage, and of her ultimate restoration to health. This day at noon we received the Lord's supper together, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Palmer. Indeed the extraordinary events which caused our brethren to leave Kafirland for a season brought them together in Graham's Town just in time to witness her latter end. Mrs. Palmer *nursed her* throughout her illness with the most

affectionate tenderness and care ; and all contributed to her comfort ; for which she felt grateful both to them and to God, whose providence had sent them in the time of need. Being almost worn out with watching her by night, and having sent the children from home, I endeavoured at the season of rest to obtain sleep. To prevent her from being at all neglected, I lay down on chairs by the bedside : her rest was good. She awoke a few times for nourishment, and always with the language of prayer or praise on her lips.—Friday, 12th. This day she appeared to be still improving. At noon she was raised up, and dressed, and once more, and for the last time, brought and laid on the sofa. About nine o'clock in the evening, while laying in bed, she complained of deafness. This however, did not excite in us any apprehensions of danger ; for as the cannon had been firing a salute just before, on the Governor's successful return from the Kafir war, we attributed the deafness to the noise, which evidently affected her at the time of firing. Mr. Palmer conducted our family worship. He read Psalm xxxiv., several parts of which she repeated, especially the third verse, “ O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.” On taking his leave, Mr. Palmer expressed his hope that she

would have a good night's rest ; when she quoted the words of the Psalmist, " For so he giveth his beloved sleep." I lay down on chairs by her bedside, as the night before. Towards midnight she awoke, and was rather restless ; but nothing particular occurred till about five in the morning, when she said, " I am sinking." Near half an hour afterwards, she said, " I am dying." I looked at her, and said, " No, my dear, you are not; I have seen you much worse than you appear at present." In a few minutes more she said, " You know not how ill I feel ; I *am* dying." Alarmed at this repeated assertion, I awoke the nurse, and sent for our medical attendants, and for all the Missionaries and their wives. Before they came I inquired into her state then with death in view. She answered with difficulty, " I can't talk. I hang on Christ." I knelt down to pray, and when concluding, she said that God was drawing near to her soul :—" Pray on." And again, when about concluding, she said, " Pray on." Soon after morning light the Doctors came, and pronounced her case hopeless. My brethren also, and their wives, assembled together. When life was nearly extinct the brethren retired to my study, to commend her to God, while our sisters remained with me in the chamber, watching in solemn sadness the mournful scene. About seven

minutes before she expired, kneeling on the bed, and hanging over her with feelings of sorrow unknown until that hour, while my heart was ready to burst with grief, I said, "Kiss me once more." She made an effort and kissed my cheek; the lips were almost cold and motionless, and in the tenderest manner, and with more than her wonted affection, she said, "God bless you." Anxious once again to hear her voice, before it was silent in death, I waited a moment, and said, "O, my Hillaria, do try and speak once more." She looked at me, and said, "Take care of the children." These were the last words she uttered, and showed the strength of maternal love, although she appeared to have laid aside all thought about them since the day she solemnly commended them to God. Perceiving that she was sinking apace, I pronounced over her the benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with thy spirit evermore." And in less than two minutes she expired, at a quarter before nine on the Saturday morning; and was interred in the Wesleyan burial-ground on the following day.

In this manner died my wife, who had been for twelve years and a half my "companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." She was herself the fruit of Missionary labours, and

afterwards lost her life through the hardships and privations that were endured in promoting the Missionary cause. Constitutionally she was of a warm and irritable temper; but divine grace cured that, and every other evil. She was a woman of great uprightness and integrity. She possessed a good understanding, and a useful gift in prayer; but rarely did she exercise it, except in praying with her family, or in her class, or with the afflicted. She greatly delighted in private prayer; and although I always rose early, yet have I many times, on awaking, found her on her knees, waiting silently upon God. The holy Scriptures were her daily companion, and, when her health permitted, were always read soon after dawn of day, before leaving her chamber, that domestic duties might not cause them to be neglected, or cursorily read. And the word of life was also generally in her hands, some moments at least, when the children had retired to rest in the evening. She had an uncommon reverence for the Sabbath-day; and was always careful so to arrange her domestic concerns, that no work of any kind should be done, not so much as seeking for the smallest garment for a child, on the day of the Lord. I never knew an individual so exceedingly scrupulous and conscientious as she was with regard to this duty. She

possessed all the graces of the Holy Spirit; but the grace for which she was most distinguished was resignation in sufferings; and when she informed Mr. Shepstone in a state of extreme debility, not long before her death, that "she had no wish to be anywhere else, nor in any other condition than that in which he saw her," she only expressed her habitual views and feelings when under the chastening hand of God. And although in our social conversations we had often referred to Psalm cxxviii., and expressed our hope that we should be spared to each other, to "see our children's children, and peace upon Israel;" yet, as has been already stated, towards the close of life, she resigned this wish also to God, and was willing to leave this world in the morning of life, when she had only just passed the thirty-third year of her age. After her death the note of admittance into the society, which I had given in Barbadoes, and all her tickets, were found carefully preserved in the Methodist Pocket-Book for 1825, and placed beside the following lines from Millman :—

THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH.

" It matters little at what hour of the day
The righteous falls asleep ; death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die ;
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven ;
The briefer life, the earlier immortality."

On reading the lines, I remembered that more than three years before her dissolution, she pointed them out to me at Mount-Coke, as being exceedingly impressive and beautiful; and as though she had some presentiment that the two last lines would, in her case, be realized,

Agreeably to the desire of the Trustees, a marble tablet is to be forwarded from this country, and placed in the new Wesleyan chapel, Graham's-Town, with the following inscription :—

“I hang on Christ.”

IN MEMORY
OF
HILLARIA,
WIFE OF THE REV. W. J. SHREWSBURY,
WHO DIED JUNE 13TH, 1835,
AGED THIRTY-THREE YEARS,

This tablet is raised, beneath the pulpit where her husband preached, in hope that this memento of her mortality may, for years to come, be edifying to those who have attended his ministry.”

THE PERFECT WORK OF PATIENCE:

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL,

GRAHAM'S-TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 7TH, 1835.

BY WILLIAM J. SHREWSBURY.



THE PERFECT WORK OF PATIENCE:

A SERMON, &c.

"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." *James i. 3, 4.*

The writer of these words is generally supposed to have been that James who is called the son of Alpheus, Matt. x. 3 : Acts i. 13., and who presided over the first Christian Church in Jerusalem, Acts xv. Without intending it, he seems to have admirably delineated his own character in the following inquiry ;—“ Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you ? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom :” *James iii. 13.*

He was the brother or kinsman of our Lord : Gal. i. 19. But he claims for himself no preeminence on that account over the rest of the Apostles. He does not so much as mention so honourable a circum-

stance, but with unaffected simplicity stiles himself “a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” To be like his adorable Master and Lord in spirit he conceived to be of greater importance than to claim relationship to him according to the flesh.

The entire Epistle may be advantageously read in connection with our Lord’s sermon on the Mount; Matt. v.—vii., of which it may be considered as an inspired exposition. Each portion of holy writ is eminently practical.

Our Text stands at the commencement of the Epistle, and forms a part of his judicious advice to his suffering brethren of the “twelve tribes who were scattered abroad,” v. 1;—scattered first throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, Acts viii. 1., in that “great persecution” which broke out at Stephen’s death; and which revived subsequently at different periods, as our Saviour had predicted, Matt. xxiv. 9. 13, whereby the disciples were dispersed more and more amongst the surrounding nations. When “iniquity abounded,” and “the love of many waxed cold,” it belonged to the presiding elder of the church in Jerusalem to comfort the hearts of the faithful, and direct them in the path of safety. At such a season how appropriate were his exhortations:—“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers

temptations : Knowing (this,) that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have (her) perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing :" v. 2. 4.

We need no other arrangement of the subject than that which the Text itself sets before us. We are here reminded of a Fact known ; and of a present Duty to be performed ; and of the great Advantages that will result from Obedience to the command of God.

1. The Fact known :—"Knowing (this,) that the trying of your faith worketh patience," v. 3.

Tribulation is the common lot of the righteous. There never hath been, and there never will be, an untried child of God. Christ suffered before he was glorified, and his followers must bear the cross before they wear the crown. What is written of those who are "before the throne of God, and who serve him day and night in his temple?"—"These are they which came out of *great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb :" Rev. vii. 14, 15. And what is written of those who are in the way to the same blessedness ?—"We must through *much tribulation* enter into the kingdom of God :" Acts xiv. 22. The Apostle Paul testifies, "whom the Lord loveth

he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. xii. 6. Now *scourging* is very *severe chastening*, yet it is added, "every son whom he receiveth," not whom he casteth away, lest the spirit should fail before God, as though "his mercy were clean gone for ever :" Psalm lxxvii. 8. A Father never feels so much compassion as when his children are in distress, whatever may have been the cause thereof : and "like as a father pitith (his) children, (so) the Lord pitith them that fear him :" Psalm ciii. 13.

When Jesus Christ was on earth he told his disciples that "in the world they should have tribulation," John xvi. 33 ; but beyond general information on this subject he revealed nothing to them. He offered them no choice as to *the kind* of tribulation, or time, or manner, or continuance of it ; these matters he reserved in his own power ; it was enough for them to know that "the very hairs of their head were all numbered," Luke xiii. 7 ; and that "in him they should have peace." And the same knowledge ought to suffice us. It surely will. For were the Redeemer to step out of his ordinary method with regard to any of you, and, as it were, presenting you with a blank paper, permit you to write down for yourself a selection of your future trials, would you

not be at a loss to know what to do? Were he to say, "Let me know thy mind: what wilt thou have me appoint; shall it be worldly crosses, or sickness, or poverty, or persecution, or bereavement, or temptation; outward perplexities, or inward conflicts?"—would not a consciousness of your own ignorance and frailty constrain you to answer, "Lord! I tremble at the very thought of choosing for myself; the only step I dare take is to refer it all back to thee; do with me as seemeth good in thy sight, only save me in the end." Seeing then of necessity we should be compelled to commit our whole cause into his hands, let us be content with what Christ chooseth for us, and ever have an unshaken persuasion that the choice is made in infinite wisdom and love. Beautifully hath David observed, "As for God, his way is perfect," 2 Sam. xxii. 31;—his whole government is absolutely perfect, and could not possibly be improved either by alteration or change. Therefore come what may, we have only to admire the order and course of his government who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working :" Isaiah xxviii. 29.

In our Text the Apostle gives an impressive and edifying view of sufferings when he calls them "the trying of *our faith*." Afflictions try every grace of the Holy Spirit; but there is something in their

nature, which, over and above the exercise of grace in general, goes directly to this very point, "the trying of *faith*." It is unnecessary to adduce single instances by way of illustration, for we have a continued body of evidence in proof of this fact contained in the Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In what a diversity of circumstances were those individuals placed whose history is therein recorded. Some of them "had trial of (cruel) mockings and scourgings," "yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment;" others were exercised in a different way; yet as they were all "just men living by faith," Heb. x. 38, so the faith by which they lived was tried; and that not for a season only, but to the end of life, when "they died in faith," and so "obtained the promises."

In the particular manner of trying faith, God has regard to the peculiar constitutional temperament of his servants, and also to the gracious dispositions he hath wrought in them by his Holy Spirit. There is always an exact adaptation of the trial to the character, state, and condition of each individual believer. We can see this remark clearly exemplified in regard to good men of former days; for who does not perceive that Abraham's faith was most tried by sacrifice; the faith of Moses by worldly allurements;

that of Job by sufferings; and Paul's by extraordinary temptations? Now if we do but apply the same consideration to ourselves, from a conviction that the principles of God's moral government are unchangeable, we shall discover in the ordering of the successive trials of life such a manifestation of infinite wisdom and goodness as will constrain us to say, "He hath done all things well :" Mark vii. 37. The common experience of the righteous furnishes a striking illustration of the Psalmist's beautiful words; "For he knoweth our frame ; he remembereth that we (are) dust :" Psalm ciii. 14. The more distinctly we notice this consolatory fact the more clear and convincing will it appear to our minds. It will satisfy us in every case that the trial sent was the very trial most needed by us, or most profitable for us. And we shall observe this to have been exactly true, not only with regard to the trial itself, but also in respect to the collateral and apparently incidental circumstances connected with it, and growing out of it. So that while calmly viewing, and reviewing the whole, a voice will be heard within, saying, "Be still, and know that I am God;" Psalm xlvi. 10. "And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you ;

for the Lord is a God of judgment ; blessed (are) all they that wait for him :" Isaiah xxx. 18.

The religion of Jesus Christ is a mystery to the men of this world. They cannot understand its nature, nor comprehend the principle from whence it proceeds. But the excellence of it, as seen in the spirit, temper, and conduct of the tried Christian, comes within the cognizance of their external senses, and affords a demonstration of its truth and reality. Suffering saints are living miracles. They confound Infidels, and silence the Scoffer, more than a thousand Treatises on the evidences of Christianity. Lead a worldly man, or an unbeliever, into the habitation of affliction, and let him hear an humble and patient Christian, destitute of earthly comforts, exclaim,— “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? (shall) tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us :” Rom. viii. 35. 37 :—and then, if he be in any degree thoughtful and candid, he must acknowledge that there is in Christianity, *an unknown something*, which gives the human mind an extraordinary supply of strength and energy to sustain the complicated ills of life. Now that mysterious and unknown principle the Scripture calls

Faith ;—which is “the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen :” Heb. xi. 1.

To the believer himself also the trial of faith brings additional proof of its genuinness and reality. He is thereby assisted to “stand against all the wiles of the devil,” and “in the evil day of temptation, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked :” Ephes. vi. 10. 18. For Satan’s chief enmity lies against faith, because he has no power in a renewed soul but what unbelief gives him. Sometimes therefore he will violently tempt the Christian to “cast away his confidence,” as though it were insufficient, or of little value : and if resisted, he may next come in with a flood of suggestions and evil reasonings, like the following,—‘Thou hast no faith, where is it ? Thou hast no confidence to cast away, it is all a delusion, where is now thy God ?’—Well, then the Lord puts his servant into the furnace, he tries him to the quick, his heart is overwhelmed within him, and the enemy thrusts more sorely at him than ever ; yet after all, in the midnight of his sorrow, his faltering voice exclaims, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ;” Job xiii. 10. :—Though he cut me off, I will die praising him. Thus he obtains the victory, “out of weakness he is made strong, he waxes valiant in fight, and turns to flight the armies of the aliens :”

Heb. xi. 34. The quenching of the fiery darts of the wicked one proves the value of the shield, and he is encouraged to "hold the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end ;" **Heb. iii. 14.**

As it pleases God to try the genuineness, so also the degree of his people's faith. If he have of his infinite mercy through Christ bestowed a large measure of this blessed gift, it shall be tried to the utmost, as in the case of the Father of the faithful, **Gen. xxii.** : if there be a good degree thereof, though mingled with some alloy of self-confidence, it shall be both proved and accepted, yet with kind rebuke, as in the case of Peter when walking on the waves of the sea ; **Matt. xiv. 28. 31.** : and if the measure of this grace be abundant in a lowly heart, so abundant that it gathers strength from discouragement, and looks for success to arise even out of apparent failures, it shall also be tried, but only to be commended by the Lord ;— "Then Jesus answered and said unto her ; O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt :" **Matt. xv. 28.** And this universal trying of faith, according to the degree of it which hath been given, furnishes an immense body of evidence in favour of the essential divinity and Godhead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is said by the Apostle to be both "the Author and Finisher of our faith :"

Heb. xii. 2. For who but an Omnipotent Being, searching the heart, and knowing what is in man, could thus regulate and direct so perfectly the trial of the faith of such a multitude of believers in all ages and generations throughout the world? In fact experimental religion is nothing less than one continued and uninterrupted series of demonstrations to the mind that "Christ is over all, God blessed for ever :" Rom. ix. 5. Wherefore, whosoever denies this Christian verity, by such denial virtually declares himself to be an Infidel and Unbeliever.

From the principle that God tries the degree of faith which his servants possess, it may be inferred as probable that matured faith in the same individual will be followed by trials surpassing those which have been heretofore known. Thus it was with Abraham. At first he was only called to go out from his kindred, and from his native land ; but afterwards he was commanded to offer up Isaac his only son upon the altar. It is true the future is hidden from our knowledge, for otherwise we could not "live by faith." But without indulging gloomy forebodings, it becomes us always to stand in a state of serious readiness for tribulations, that they may never come upon us "unawares," nor our mind be "overcharged" with carefulness, as though "some

strange thing had happened" unto us. We shall never have done with our last trial till we have drawn our last breath. The Apostle intimates this when he tells us that in him who hath "delivered," and "doth deliver," "we trust that he will yet deliver :" 2 Cor. i. 10. It is our duty, then daily to pray, "Lord, increase our faith ;" Luke xvii. 5. ; and daily to remember that the increased faith will be *tried*, that "being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, it may be found unto praise and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ :" 1 Peter i. 7.

What a discovery of the divine goodness is given us by the Apostle Peter in the words just quoted ! Tried faith is to be hereafter rewarded. Now faith itself is the gift of God ; and both the inclination and the power to use it proceed from him ; and the preservation of faith from failing in the day of trial comes from him also : Luke xxii. 32. ; yet so abundant are the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus that there is not a single act of faith in time, which is not connected with an eternity of reward in the life to come. Thus to God alone belongs the sole glory of the gift, and of the power to exercise it, and of the saving results of it ; while to man is secured, besides the present benefits, a future reward proportioned to

the severity of trial experienced by the faithful soul. "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding (and) eternal weight of glory; while, by faith, we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, (are) temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal :" 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

So thoroughly will the reward correspond to the sufferings and trial, and be increased thereby, that even the bodies of saints shall come in for a large additional share of glory in consequence of the pain and disease to which they were subject in their probationary state. The bodies of Martyrs, which were tortured in loathsome dungeons, and consumed to ashes in the flames, will come forth from their graves with superior lustre and brightness in the resurrection at the last day. Nor is it improbable that even the sufferings of infants, and such as die in tender years, will in this way be recompensed in the life to come; so that as "sin," in its penal consequences, "hath abounded" in their brief and early sorrows, "grace shall much more abound" in their future glory, through the merits of Jesus their Saviour and Redeemer. The loathsome body of Job, which, as "he sat down among the ashes," he "scraped with a

potsherd," when the purulent matter burst forth from "the sore boils," with which he had been smitten by Satan "from the sole of his foot unto his crown," Job, ii. 7, 8, will surely have, through the believing endurance of his amazing and unparalleled sufferings, a vastly augmented degree of glory. When his flesh was consumed away through the continuance of disease, and only the "skin," and that broken and scarred, remained, and all hope of recovery was gone, and he appeared fast sinking into the grave, covered with a cloud of impenetrable darkness, we hear him deliver this noble testimony—"I know (that) my Redeemer liveth, and (that) he shall stand at the latter (day) upon the earth : and (though) after my skin, (worlins) destroy this (body) yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, (though) my reins be consumed within me :" Job xix. 25. 27. O how will he shine as a star of the first magnitude when he really beholds that Redeemer in the latter day ; for it is to the human *body* the Apostle refers when he says, "for (one) star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead :" 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. And that poor Lazarus who was "laid" at the rich man's "gate full of sores," and "who desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell

from the rich man's table, while the dogs came and licked his sores ;" Luke xvi. 20, 21 ; it may be some common grave was allotted him, a little earth to cover a diseased and attenuated frame ; yet how literally was his body, unwashed, unanointed, unperfumed, "sown in *corruption*." But when "raised in incorruption," methinks he, and Job, and such like sufferers, will almost be the leaders of the Chorus of the redeemed, when all shall shout, "O death, where is thy sting ? O grave where is thy victory ?" 1 Cor. xv. 55. And is this the end of the trying of our faith ? And shall we then "faint in the day of adversity ?" Prov. xxiv. 10. God forbid ! Rather by thanksgiving let us make the cup of affliction the cup of salvation, and daily call on the name of the Lord.

But the reason of the trying of faith, as it regards this life, is set before us in the Text chiefly in a practical manner, as though it mainly concerned us to be mindful of present duty, and leave all beside to God. The immediate result then is stated by the Apostle to be this,—"the trying of your faith worketh patience. Trials endue faith with vigour, call forth its energy, and, even when feeble, augment its strength. Ah ! many a "bruised reed," when tried, becomes "mighty through the power of God."

When once-tried faith is fairly set to work, its operations are truly wonderful; it leads to so much prayer and humiliation and abandonment to God's eternal mercies in Christ Jesus; and to such comprehensive views of the divine government as "ordained in the hand of a mediator;" Gal. iii. 19; in whose service "angels" are continually employed as "ministering spirits for the heirs of salvation;" Heb. i. 14; and to such an entire satisfaction of mind with the whole economy of God, that the "soul is strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;" Col. i. 11, 12. In this manner "tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us;" Rom. v. 5. The natural effect of trials in those who yield to an "evil heart of unbelief" is, murmuring against the Lord, and a "departing from him," Heb. iii. 12., witness the conduct of Israel in the wilderness; but the gracious effect produced by the trying of faith in those who are "looking unto Jesus." Heb. xii. 2, is increased

confidence in God and a loving patience which beareth, hopeth, and endureth all things. "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good :" 1 Sam. iii. 18.

Now the Apostle affirms this to be a well-known result. "*Knowing* (this,) saith he, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." It is no doubtful theory, or uncertain conjecture, but a well ascertained Fact ; it is all sober reality.

The word of God is one source of our knowledge ; for on this subject the statements of the Holy Scriptures are very explicit and full. God allows of no murmurers in his family. "Thy will be done," is the prayer of every child of God. Of believing Abraham it is written,—"And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise :" Heb. vi. 15. Nor was his a peculiar case, but only one of many ; for we are exhorted to be "followers of *them* who through faith and patience inherit the promises ;" Heb. vi. 12. And all the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord in former days are set before us as "examples of suffering affliction, and of patience ;" James v. 10. So surely as they suffered, so surely they patiently endured. The latter was inseparable from the former in their holy lives : and thus in them "the work of righteousness was peace,

and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever ;" Isaiah xxxii. 17.

Nor are the instances few in which we have had our knowledge confirmed by observing the manner in which those christians of our own time, with whom we have had personal intercourse, have borne their afflictions and sorrows. We have seen them walk unburnt in fire. When their "stroke has been heavier than their groaning," Job xxiii. 2,—however deep that groan may have been, we have heard them make their moan unto God in accents of such plaintive subinission, that their very sighs and groans might have mingled with the songs of angels, without spoiling the harmony of heaven. "(There is) one event unto all :" Eccles. ix. 3. There is no kind of calamity known in the world, which has not at some time or other besidden some of God's choicest saints. Fevers, agues, consumptions, plague, pestilence, famine; nakedness, peril, sword; burning, drowning, imprisonment, racks, tortures, and whatever else can be classed under the general word sufferings, have been endured by them, that it may be seen however diversified their afflictions, the principle of faith in Christ is always the same, and can enable them to be "patient in every kind of tribulation :" Rom. xii. 12. **Yea, every genuine Christian**

that we meet with, whatever be his circumstances, in a greater or lesser degree, confirms in his life and temper the general declaration of the Apostle, "the trying of your faith worketh patience."

Our knowledge of this divine truth is consummated by our own experience. Here then let us "commune" about this matter "with our own hearts;" Psalm iv. 4. May we not testify with one of old, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes?" Psalm cxix. 71. Has not our spiritual benefit been promoted thereby? Can we not remember what carefulness it wrought, what searchings of heart, what inquiries, "Why am I thus?" What readiness of spirit to adopt the salutary advice of pious Elihu? "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne (chastisement,) I will not offend (any more.) (That which) I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more;" Job xxxiv. 31, 32. And how forcible his reasoning was felt to be; and how just his sayings;—("Should it be) according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose;" Job xxxiv, 33. And what an humbling acknowledgement it produced from within; "Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once

have I spoken, but I will not answer ; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further ;” Job xl. 45. Have not the forwardness, and peevishness, and fretfulness, and hurry of nature thus been subdued ? And has not “ patience ” been increased and matured in the soul in their stead ? And have we not found the truth of these blessed words of the Prophet ;—(“ It is) good that (a man) should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.”—“ He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.”—“ For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief ; yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men ? ” Lam. iii. 26. 29—31—33.

Seeing then that in so many ways we have gained a knowledge of the important fact so clearly stated by the Apostle, let us proceed to obey his exhortation, in which he reminds us of,

II. Our present duty ; “ But let patience have (her) perfect work.”

Patience is an assemblage of Christian virtues unknown in the heavenly world ; for there is no occasion for its exercise in a state of pure enjoyment. It belongs only to earth. It is a lovely grace, admired by angels in the course of their ministrations

to the heirs of salvation ; but no angel ever felt it, although the Lord of angels manifested it in full perfection, when he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief :" Isaiah liii. 3. Nor shall we need it any more when faith is exchanged for the everlasting fruition of God. This consideration ought deeply to affect our hearts with a sense of the inestimable privilege of suffering for Christ, and for his cause, in the present life. We thereby gain opportunities of glorifying his blessed name such as we shall never again have to all eternity. And shall we then fail to make the most of our fleeting hours of sorrow ? From a grateful sense of obligation, shall we not be concerned to make "the sufferings of this present time," Rom. viii. 18., yield as large a revenue of glory as possible to him "who loved us and gave himself for us ?" Gal. ii. 20. Shall not the cross be a welcome load for his sake who was crucified ? And life be precious as the only period of our immortal existence in which the cross can be borne ? O Jesus, we can, we will, through thy grace, "magnify thee in our body, whether it (be) by life, or by death :" Phil. i. 20.

There is an energy in patience corresponding to the faith in Christ from whence it proceeds. For as "faith worketh patience," so "patience hath (her)

perfect "work" to perform. If therefore it be true that patience can only be exercised in a state of suffering, it is also true that it is more than a mere quiet submission, as of necessity, to ills that cannot be avoided; for there is an *activity* in it proportioned to the sufferings that have to be endured. Patience exerts an all-controlling influence over the whole soul. As the commander of an army regulates and directs all its movements, so patience orders and governs the thoughts, desires, and affections of the "inward man." It gives self-possession, and calm recollectedness of mind. "In your patience," saith Christ, "possess ye your souls :" Luke xxi. 19. It inspires the mind with an undaunted fortitude, and cries aloud, "Courage," and look upward, and remember who hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee :" 2 Cor. xii. 9. It animates with a perseverance that never can be conquered. "Deep may call unto deep, and all the waves and billows of affliction may go over the soul ;" Psalm xlvi. 7. ; but even then Patience is at work, and furnishes language for prayer, and a joyous expectation of deliverance :—"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord," Psalm cxxx. 1. ; and, "we went through fire and through water ; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place ;" Psalm lxvi. 12. Patience therefore is not a mere passive

grace, she hath her “ work” to perform, and her chosen motto is written a few verses below the Text ; “ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him ; ” James i. 12.

In Mr. Henry’s comment we have the following illustration of the “ perfect work” of Patience. “ It consists” he says, “ *in four things*; viz, In bearing all God’s appointments : As long as he appoints : With an humble obedient eye to him : And in not only bearing troubles, but rejoicing in them.” There are not many safer guides to follow, in searching for the meaning of the Holy Spirit in the written word, than the excellent Commentator now quoted ; and as he has well elucidated the passage in the simple and clear arrangement brought before you, we shall employ the hints he has suggested, and briefly enlarge upon them.

It is then one part of the “ perfect work” of patience to teach us to “ bear all God’s appointments.” Every murmuring thought and vain is controlled by the primary consideration that pervades the mind in trouble ;—this is not the result of chance, it is not man, but God. “ Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ; ” Job v. 6. “ I was dumb, I opened not

my mouth ; because thou didst (it) ;" Psalm xxxix. 9. There is no greater source of human misery than forgetfulness of God ; nor any more common occasion of that forgetfulness than looking at second causes, almost exclusively, as though man ruled the earth, and had the chief sway in matters that relate to our happiness. The only language the heart can then use and understand is, "all these things are against me :" Gen. xlvi. 36. " Mine eye shall no more see good :" Job vii. 7. But when patience calms and governs the mind, every complaint is silenced, and every fear allayed. A recognition of God's superintending providence and care excludes anxiety and distrust; and whatever afflictions or injuries he permits, without reviling man the soul is directed immediately to God, and taught to wait only on him for succour and salvation. Yea, be his chastisements ever so numerous, and most grievous to flesh and blood, still we must bear them " all" with steady submission and fortitude ; from a full persuasion that God loves us too well to spare one stroke of his rod, or to exempt us from one trial that is necessary to accomplish his gracious purposes in our soul.

" Leave to his sov'reign sway,
To choose and to command:
So shalt thou, wondering, own his way,
How wise, how strong his hand."

Patience is eminently an *enduring* grace. "Behold," says the Apostle, "we count them happy which endure." And then he immediately adds, "Ye have heard of the patience," or endurance, "of Job;" James v. 11. And indeed there can be no reason for submitting to God at one time which will not apply to all times, and to every possible occasion. Human life abounds with contingencies; but God in Christ, the God of love, hath only one eternal purpose of making "all things work together for good to them that love him;" Rom. viii. 28. "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good :" 1 Pet. iii. 13. Patience therefore will sustain the mind, and enable it to hold out, and to bear every "ill as *long* as God appoints." It will never say, "Lord thou hast now tried me enough; I have had more than my share of troubles in this vain life; must I suffer all my days without intermission?" It rather directs the soul to the throne of grace with this request ;—

" Long as our fiery trials last,
Long as the cross we bear;
O let our souls on thee be cast
In never-ceasing prayer."

"Here is the patience of the saints;" Rev. xiv. 12. Other men flee from God in trouble; they flee to

him for succour. And they find that "the Lord of hosts is with them, the God of Jacob is their refuge;" Psalm xlvi. 11. If like their blessed Lord, they bear the cross till they faint under it, still they will not seek to throw it off till he providentially relieve them of the burden; but keeping Christ in view, their whole desire is to be "conformed to his image, who is the firstborn among many brethren;" Rom. viii. 29. It was this spirit which enabled a Christian of former days to say, "Lord, what thou wilt, and as long as thou wilt;" and which recently disposed a Christian Minister,* in his last sufferings, which were extreme, to exclaim, "It is my heavenly Father's will, and I would not have it otherwise for all the world." And to shew the power of divine grace, and the uniform result of the Holy Spirit's operations in the human heart, we may here add the prayer of an afflicted Hottentot in South Africa. He was overheard to say, "Though I be so severely afflicted, what thou doest, O Lord, that is well done."

Now it is in this way that patience works, by directing us in all things to have "an humble, obedient eye to God." The work of patience is an

* The Rev. William Buckley Fox, Wesleyan Minister, who died at Tiverton, April 9th, 1834.

upward work. “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help,” saith the Psalmist. “My help (cometh) from the Lord which made heaven and earth;” Psalm cxxi. 1, 2. When the eye of the mind is directed patiently towards God, it is very observant of his will and purpose; and the soul is disposed to humility in his presence. It sees that he only uses the pruning knife where he might have justly employed the sword; and the acknowledgement is felt to be due,—“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;” Psalm ciii. 10. “Patience worketh experience” of the infinite goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord, of which there is a more lively conviction wrought in the soul by the corrections of his hand than could have been produced in any other way, or by any other means. And as to the principle of obedience, that becomes greatly strengthened and confirmed. Even Christ himself, “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;” Heb. v. 8. And every one in whom “patience has (her) perfect work” shall in this respect be as his Master. The more he bears of mortal sorrows, the more shall he delight in the will of God, and be led farther out into the depths of that prayer taught him by the

Saviour, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven :" Matt. vi. 10.

It is impossible to offer unto God any *petition* that is more nearly allied to *praise*. He who can fully enter into the spirit of it, will have grace "not only to bear troubles, but rejoice in them." "We glory in tribulations," saith the Apostle : Rom. v. 3. "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires," saith the Prophet, "even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea." "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous;" Isaiah xxiv. 14, 15.—Not that tribulation is in itself a joyous thing, for then it would cease to be tribulation ; but when it is patiently endured, the present benefits and future advantages are so distinctly seen and so confidently anticipated as to become a rational ground of glorying and joy. The condition of God's servants may be often likened to the state of the children of Israel in the land of their captivity. Surrounded with sorrows, the Israelites sometimes hung for a season their harps upon the willows ; but they never so far abandoned themselves to grief as to fling them down the stream :—there they hung ;—and they preserved them tuned, ready at what time the hope prophecy inspired should gladden their hearts, despite the taunts of

their adversaries, to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land ;" Psalm cxxxvii. 4. Even so "praise is now comely for the upright," Psalm xxxiii. 1.; for to him, "there ariseth light in the darkness," Psalm cxii. 4.; and he remembers that it is written, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer :" Isaiah liv. 7, 8. Of the manner in which the perfect work of patience produceth praise, we have an illustrious example in holy Job. For when he had been deprived of his property and family in one fatal day of calamity, he said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away :"—but he did not stop there,—he added, "blessed be the name of the Lord :" Job i. 21. He could not close the catastrophe without a song; even the first burst of his grief could not expend itself till, along with his sublime adoration, it poured forth a solemn strain of thanksgiving to the name of the Lord. In Jesus we have a still higher and more perfect example. With his sufferings full in view in the night he was betrayed, he, with his disciples, "sung an hymn," before "they went out unto the mount of Olives;" Matt. xxvi. 30. That which

they sung on that memorable occasion was probably the Paschal Psalms, from the hundred and fourteenth to the hundred and eighteenth inclusive ; beginning with, "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language ;" and ending with, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he his good : for his mercy endureth for ever." This then is the perfect work of patience, to be " always giving thanks for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" Ephes. v. 20. : as it is also written in another Scripture, "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks ; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you :" 1 Thess. v. 16—18. So shall the end of all our afflictions be answered, and the blessings promised be secured to our souls.

III. The Great Advantages that will result from Obedience to the will of God.

God doth nothing without design ; and the end he constantly hath in view in every trial is the bestowment of some real, great, and permanent good. "The Lord thy God led thee, and fed thee with manna in the wilderness, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end ;" Deut. viii. 2. 16. And it has been already shewn

that the appointed means are well adapted to the accomplishment of the end designed, and which is so fully expressed in the concluding portion of the Text;—"that ye may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing." Wherefore it only remains that we be as yielding clay in the hands of the Potter; and then we shall be made "vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work :" 2 Tim. ii. 21.

Perfection is much spoken of in the Holy Scriptures. In them God himself is described as being perfect; his works and word are perfect; Psalm xix : his Gospel is called "the perfect law of liberty ;" James i. 25 ; in our text the word "perfect" occurs twice; and in many other places it is employed to denote the character, privileges and duties of the righteous: and the Scriptures are said to be "all given by inspiration of God" for this very purpose "that the man of God may be *perfect*, throughly furnished unto all good works;" 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Whatever, therefore, the meaning of this sacred term may be, it is clearly not a word to be despised or ridiculed by any who fear God; but, on the contrary, to be reverenced, seeing the Holy Ghost hath chosen to employ it so frequently in the Scriptures of truth and salvation. And laying aside all prejudice, it

becomes us with childlike simplicity to inquire what is the mind of the Lord in his revealed will.

In regard to those who have been the subjects of divine grace, perfection may be viewed under different aspects. We may consider it as enjoined under the successive dispensations of grace. To Abram the Lord said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect;" Gen. xvii. 1. Of Job it is written, "he was a perfect and upright man;" Job i. 1. And Jesus said to his disciples, "Beye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" Matt. v. 48. Thus it appears God has always required his servants to be perfect, according to the tenor of the gracious economy under which they have been placed; nor, from the infinite rectitude of his nature, could he have required less, whatever provision his mercy may have made and allowed for the pardon of their offences. And since God has unfolded his grace and mercy more and more in every successive age, until his Son Jesus Christ was manifest in the flesh, it follows that the same words of holy writ gather an intensity of meaning from the superior light and grace of the Christian Dispensation. The command of Moses to the children of Israel, Deut. xxx. 6., when embodied in the Gospel, Mark xii. 30, has an

enlarged application, as being addressed to those who are called to “comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,” of divine love; even “to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God;” Ephes. iii. 18, 19.

The word “perfect” will also have various shades of meaning in the Holy Scriptures, according to the particular bearing and connexion of the passage where it is found. Thus in Matt. v. 48, the perfection of love, goodness, or benevolence, is chiefly intended, because the Saviour had been treating of the forgiveness of injuries as a branch of Christian Duty. In James i. 25, and iii. 2, the perfection of obedience and of self-government are particularly signified. And in Heb. ii. 10, where “the Captain of our salvation” is said to have been “made perfect through sufferings,” we are principally to understand the perfection of obedient submission to the will of God. Now in setting forth the sense of the Text we may take in all the shades of meaning just mentioned, and consider the word perfect as equally including love, obedience, and submission. For the whole scope of the passage conducts us to so large and comprehensive an interpretation. The Apostle had been treating of a long course of trial and experience;

of the trial of faith, and of its operations when tried; and of the "perfect," the unhindered, uninterrupted work of patience along with such trial of faith ; and of the combined operation both of faith and patience to produce some result corresponding to the plan and purpose of God, who had ordered and directed the whole :—when therefore the Apostle develops that result after such a course of trial, we must be prepared to hear that it is something high and holy, corresponding to the goodness and grace of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. And what his benevolent design is the Apostle brings out at once in few, but weighty words ;—"that ye may be perfect,"—and then subjoins, as being in part exegetical of the term, —and "entire, wanting nothing." We conclude, therefore, that we are proceeding on safe ground when we explain the word "perfect" here, as taking within its range whatever is "holy and just and good."

When a penitent sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ with his heart unto righteousness he is pardoned, and loves God, because he hath first loved him. 1 John iv. 19. The love of God then communicated is afterwards continued and increased by the trials which as a Christian Believer he is called to endure : Rom. v. 3—5. For as chastening proceeds from God's love to us, so in return it produceth love

in our hearts towards God. "I love the Lord," says the Psalmist, "because he hath heard my voice, (and) my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon (him) as long as I live ;" Psalm cxvi. 1, 2. Divine love is amongst "the peaceable fruits of righteousness" which God's chastening "yieldeth" in them that are "exercised thereby ;" Heb. xii. 11. It is "by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning," Isaiah iv. 4, that the gracious promise receives its full accomplishment, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin ;" Isaiah i. 25. The alloy of wordly hopes and fears, of earthly desire and love, which had too often mingled with the purer desire after God, and delight in his service; is removed when the Lord "sitteth as a refiner, to purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness ;" Mal. iii. 3. The voice of God in affliction cries, "My son, give me thine heart," Prov. xxiii. 26. "Thou hast often offered it me in the spirit of sacrifice when engaged in devotion, but too frequently hast thou been unmindful of the dedication, and gone astray like a lost sheep, though thou hast not forgotten my commandments," Psalm cxix. 176 : now I have come by this loss, or affliction, or bereavement,

to claim that heart which has been surrendered as mine own ;—yield, and be mine for ever.” Then the humbled Christian boweth down before the Lord, and rejoicing to own his sovereign sway, and drawn by the cords of love divine, he crieth out, “ I know, O Lord, that thy judgments (are) right, and (that) thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me;” Psalm cxix.

75. Henceforwards, true to my engagements, I will say, “ Whom have I in heaven (but thee ?) and (there) is none upon earth (that) I desire besides thee :” Psalm lxxiii. 25.—When that holy woman, Lady Maxwell, was left a desolate widow in early youth, “ I see,” said she, “ that God will have all my heart, and *he shall have it* ;” and from that hour she consecrated her whole soul to the service of God, and gathered a rich reward in the enjoyment of “ the perfect love, that casteth out fear,” 1 John iv. 18, all her days.

Now “ love is the fulfilling of the law :” Rom. xiii. 10. For “ the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and (of) a good conscience, and (of) faith unfeigned :” 1 Tim. i. 5. And “ this is the love of God that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous : 1 John v. 3. The fruit and evidence therefore of perfect love is cheerful and undeviating obedience to the com-

mandments of God ; of which a steadfast dependance on the merits of Christ as the only ground of acceptance with God is the chief. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment ;" 1 John iii. 23. For the obedience which God requires is "obedience to the faith," Rom. i. 5; and "without faith it is impossible to please (him)." Heb. xi. 6. Now the faith which has been tried becomes more fruitful thereby, even as Abraham's was, of whom the Apostle writes ;—"Seest thou how faith" when it was tried "by offering Isaac his son upon the altar, wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ;" 2 James ii. 21, 22—perfect, not only on that occasion, but also as the spring and principle of all his future obedience to the commands of God. It is the folly of sinners that though they are "stricken," they will "revolt more and more;" Isaiah i. 5.; but it is the wisdom of saints to profit by their sufferings, as David when he said, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray ; but now have I kept thy word :" Psalm cxix. 67. "Blessed (is) the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law ; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity :" Psalm xciv. 12, 13.

And what is the true rest of the soul in this vale of tears, but "perfect" submission to the will of God?—God has endued man with that faculty or power which we call the Will, that he may *himself*, though not *of himself*, but through and by the light, and grace, and power of the Holy Spirit, be capable of willing what God willeth, and of choosing what God commandeth; and thereby have the ability of offering unto his Maker a service worthy of his acceptance, which no creature destitute of freedom of will can possibly perform. We must admit this to be the constitution of man or we annihilate the whole work of redemption by Christ-Jesus. For he took upon him our nature, "took part of *the same*," Heb. ii. 14, though "without sin," Heb. iv. 15, and is therefore called "the Son of man," Luke xix. 10.; "the second man," 1 Cor. xv. 47; and "man," Rom. v. 15—19; and this is further evidenced by the sacred genealogies in which his lineal descent, in connexion with his supernatural conception, is recorded, Matt. i. and Luke iii., and by the unequivocal declarations that he was "made *of the seed* of David according to the flesh," Rom i. 4, that "he took on him *the seed* of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16, and that he "was made *of a woman*," Gal. iv. 4. Wherefore, seeing he is as truly man as really God, if

our will be not free, neither was his ; if our actions be necessitated, so were his ; and consequently in his life there were neither virtue nor obedience, nor in his death any merit to atone for the sins of mankind. But we hear Jesus himself testifying, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father : John x. 17, 18. In these memorable words we discover the *freedom* and the *submission* of his will to the Father ; in both which, conjoined, consisted the perfection of his sacrifice when he became "*obedient unto death, even the death of the cross :*" Phil. ii. 8. And the same appears in his prayer in the garden, " O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt ;" Matt. xxvi. 39. From all this we learn our duty, privilege, and happiness. We are taught that the highest act of reason, and the noblest exercise of the freedom of the will, consist in the most entire submission of the whole soul to the holy, blessed, supreme, and sovereign will of God. An example of this utmost perfection of our mortal nature, for all future ages to reverence, and in their

measure to imitate, was given by our adorable Redeemer on the Cross, who, when he had cried, “It is finished! *bowed his head*, and gave up the ghost :” John xix. 30. That memorable act of bowing the head is an everlasting lesson to mankind. It indicated that in his last gasp ~~he~~ was all submission to his Father who had appointed him to the high work which he only could perform, of redeeming that he might save a lost world. Let then the suffering saint believe in and imitate the suffering Saviour. For what can be desired higher or greater than this grace, perfect submission to him who is Supreme, “that God may be all in all ?” 1 Cor. xv. 28.

It will not be needful to enlarge upon the remaining portion of the Text, because the substance of what it imports is included in the expositions that have been given of the principal term “perfect.” Mr. Wesley’s brief note on the two words “perfect and entire,” taken together, is simply this,—“Adorned with every Christian grace.” We may make this short sentence the basis of the few thoughts to be advanced on the word “entire.” It is the design of God that you should have the whole Christian character complete; —that there should be no moral defect, or blemish, or deficiency. The offerings under the law were whole, entire, sound ; that which was maimed or torn

might not be presented to God. Even so must we be made " faultless," in order to our being " presented before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy :" Jude 24. Were there no " fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," Zech. xiii. 1. ; no Holy Spirit given, the endless Source of grace and purity, the Restorer of man's fallen nature to holiness by his renewing and sanctifying power, the whole matter would be hopeless, and nothing would remain for us but to lie down in deepest confusion and despair. But, God be praised ! there is hope for sinful man in the gospel, which declares, " the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7 ; and in the promise of the Holy Ghost, which is " unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts ii. 39. In believing this message, we have life and holiness and heaven. Whatever christian grace is required God can bestow, and to whatever extent required ; so that the soul adorned therewith, through his endless mercy, may take up the language of the Prophet, " I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness ;" Isaiah lxi. 10. And

thus being made "perfect and entire," nothing will be "wanting," either for earth or heaven.

God has many services for his servants to perform in the present world, and many ways of preparing them for their work, of which the trial of their faith and patience is not the least common. When the end is fully answered, they stand ready for whatever scene of labour he may appoint them. They are content that Christ should both choose their work and choose their condition ; that he should have the command of them, and the disposal of them. Thus they covenant with the Lord, according to the form recommended by that holy minister, Joseph Alleine :—
" Make me what thou wilt, Lord, and set me where thou wilt ; let me be a vessel of silver or gold, or a vessel of wood or stone, so I be a vessel of honour : of whatsoever form or metal, whether higher or lower, finer or coarser, I am content; if I be not the head, or the eye, or the ear, one of the nobler and more honourable instruments thou wilt employ, let me be the hand or the foot, one of the most laborious, and lowest, and most contemptible of all the servants of my Lord; let my dwelling be on the dunghill, my portion in the wilderness, my name and lot amongst the hewers of wood, or drawers of water, among the doorkeepers of thy house : any where, where I

may be serviceable." This disposition of mind is the best qualification for usefulness, and he who endeavours under the influence of this spirit, "*daily* to perform his vows," Psalm lxi. 8, will not fail throughout life to employ his talents so as effectually to promote the glory of God, and the best interests of his fellow-men. And at whatever hour he is summoned hence, being found either "employed for God, or laid aside for God," nothing is wanting to complete his preparation for glory; and with gladness he hears the Great Master's approving word,—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" Matt xxv. 23.

And now, having shewn you the gracious design of God in the trial of his people, it may be useful in concluding, briefly to point out how we may best secure its accomplishment. In some degree, perhaps, we see that the end has been answered; and yet we may feel a deep consciousness that we have not profited as we ought to have done, considering how much pains the Lord hath taken with us in the course of his providential discipline and fatherly correction. But let us not be discouraged; neither let us become weary and faint in our minds. Let us give thanks to his holy name for any measure of improvement, ascribing to him all the glory of it, and taking to

ourselves the shame of every failure ; and at the same time let us seek grace to profit more effectually by our present trials, and by those we may yet have to endure. To assist us herein, let us attend to three things, all of which are contained in the Text, and its immediate connection. First, Let us ask God to teach us. " If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him," v. 5. And who does not lack wisdom when his faith is tried ? Human reason is no guide here. However clear and sound his natural understanding may be, he will certainly be bewildered unless he be taught of God to discern the things that occur in a divine light ; but if he be favoured with heavenly teaching, the Scripture shall be fulfilled which saith, " But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things : 1 John ii. 20. Let us therefore evermore ask wisdom of God, in the name of Jesus, and with a believing heart ; we having an unshaken confidence in his holy promises, which shall be fulfilled in their season.— Secondly, Let us learn to make our calculations aright. " My brethren," saith the Apostle, " count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." O how grievously have we been mistaken ! When afflictions have befallen us, we have pondered over their

mournful and distressing character, and have accounted each case an occasion of sorrow only ; whereas the Apostle directs us to “ count it joy,” yea “ *all* joy,” even though the temptations be “ divers,” manifold and various. This is divine arithmetic, this is Scripture calculation ; and were it always at hand and applied, every new trouble would augment our holy triumph in God, and be received as a pledge of his yet more abundant grace ; and we should feel firmly persuaded that though the gathering clouds might burst around us, they would yet have impressed upon their forms the bow of the covenant, the pledge of endless mercy to our souls. “ Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither (shall) fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and (there shall be) no herd in the stalls : yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation : ” Hab. iii. 17, 18. Thirdly, Let us be obedient to the divine command. In the Text our duty is plainly set before us. Obey and live. “ Let patience have her perfect work.” Do not hinder or thwart its operations by murmuring, or repining, or turning aside, (alas ! how vainly !) into any forbidden paths for comfort in the time of tribulation. Yield to its influence. Give up your whole

soul to the unhindered governance of this divine grace of patience. Hearken to the sovereign word, "Be still, and know that I am God!" And so shall the whole subject brought before you be embodied in your own experience; and you shall be able to remember as your constant guide and consolation the Scripture that has now been expounded and applied to your souls.—"Knowing this," "that the trying of your faith worketh patience." "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Amen.

HYMN I.

THEE, Jesus, full of truth and grace,
Thee, Saviour, we adore;
Thee, in affliction's furnace praise,
And magnify thy power.

Thy power in human weakness shewn,
Shall make us all entire;
We now thy guardian presence own,
And walk unburnt in fire.

Thee, Son of Man, by faith we see,
And glory in our guide!
Surrounded and upheld by thee,
The fiery test abide.

The fire our graces shall refine,
Till, moulded from above,
We bear the character divine,
The stamp of perfect love.

HYMN II.

THOU Lamb of God, thou Prince of Peace,
For thee my thirsty soul doth pine ;
My longing heart implores thy grace,
O make me in thy likeness shine !

With fraudless, even, humble mind,
Thy will in all things may I see;
Through love be every wish resign'd,
And hallow'd my whole heart to thee.

HYMN III.

FATHER in the Name I pray
Of thy incarnate Love;
Humbly ask, that as my day,
My suffering strength may prove :
When my sorrows most increase,
Let thy strongest joys be given ;
Jesus, come with my distress,
And agony is heaven.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
For good remember me !
Me, whom thou hast caus'd to trust
For more than life on thee :
With me in the fire remain,
Till like burnish'd gold I shine ;
Meet, through consecrated pain ;
To see the Face divine.

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